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In the old Portuguese documents, and in particular in an account written by a military commandant to the prelate of Mozambique, at the end of the XVIIIth century, the chiefs of the countries in the vicinity of the Bay were described in grandiloquent terms : "They are very powerful, very rich, most honourable, generous and respected." The Chief of Khosen is called the Grand Cacha, and is described as "a kind of Emperor." Though it is probable that, in former times, the regal paraphernalia of the Thonga chiefs were more brilliant than now, these are manifest exaggerations, such as are often met with in the tales of the old explorers ; nevertheless there is a good deal of truth in these accounts. "Royalty," in the mind of the Native, is a venerable and sacred institution ; respect for the Chief, and obedience to his commands are universal ; his prestige is maintained, not by a great display of riches and of power, but by the mystical idea that, as the body lives by nourishment taken through its head, so the life of the nation is sustained through its chief.

The Thongas do not explain this in abstract words, but by images which are very striking. The chief is the Earth, as we have seen. He is the cock by which the country is sustained. (Tobane.) Mankhelu adds : "He is the bull ; without him the cows cannot bring forth. He is the husband ; the country without him is like a woman without a husband. He is the man of the village. Should a dog bark, if there is no man, nobody will dare to go out of the hut and ascertain the danger that threatens, nobody will have the courage to chase away the hyena. A clan without a chief has lost its reason (hungukile). It is dead. Because who will call the army together ? There is no longer any army ! The chief is our great warrior (nhena), he is our forest where we hide ourselves and from whom we ask for laws. The counsellors (tinduna) cannot proclaim laws."

Conscious of this position, the chief does his best to maintain and to increase his prestige. He must not be too familiar. He does not eat with his subjects, except with certain favourites. Sometimes he eats alone in his hut. Or, when he has slaughtered an ox, he chooses amongst the various joints those he prefers, and feasts before his subjects, who look on respectfully, "swallowing

643 their own saliva," (viz., their mouths watering the while). He sometimes throws a piece of meat to one of his favourites, who accepts it with both hands, shouting: "Bayete!" In the Tembe capital, men crawled on their knees before the chief, shouting: "Ngolanyama" "Lion!". Nwangundjuwana, the chief of Nwamba, was known for his more democratic ways. He used to eat with his men.

To shake hands with a chief was also considered as taboo before the days of Christianity. Now Muhlabi somewhat reluctantly accepts the hand which is extended to him by the most modest of his subjects, even by children on Christmas Day. The idea which is at the bottom of the fear is that the chief is a magical being. He possesses special medicines with which he rubs himself or which he swallows, so that his body is taboo (ntjumbu wa hosi wa yila). He is dangerous. "When he points at you with his finger, you are a dead man" (Mboza). Owing to the charms with which he had smeared his body, Maphunga, the chief of Nondwane, made those who discussed State affairs with him, even White people, "unable to answer him or to resist his will" (Mboza). In order to increase this salutary fear, some 643 171 chiefs had the curious custom of *disappearing for a time* (tumba) "just like a big caterpillar when it enters the ground and becomes a chrysalis." The same Maphunga used to remain invisible during one week each year before the great bukanye feast (1). We shall see the same rite practised by the great magicians, who also aspire to create a deep impression on the imagination of the people. (See Part VI.) As already mentioned, 643 the chief alone must be addressed by the royal salutation "Bayete" 576 or "Baheti." The hosana has no right to it legally, and must be addressed by the term "Baba," "Father." As regards subjects, they are called *malandja*, from the verb *ku landja*,

(1) This custom is met with amongst the Pedi, where old chiefs abandon their kraals and go to live in the desert for years, leaving a prince regent in their stead. This kind of hermit life gives them great prestige. The Pedi chief Sikororo, near Shiluvane, is the best-known case of such a disappearance. Sexual continence, even repugnance to women, was one of his reasons for this seclusion, which lasted until his death. (1903 or 1904).

643 to follow, the followers. The Chief is the one who walks in front, whom the malandja, the ordinary folk, follow from motives of submission and fidelity, much as a dog follows his master from attachment, but is ready to fight for him should occasion arise.

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551 The name of the chief must not be pronounced on any and every occasion. Should it contain a word which designates another object, the name of this object must be changed. So the Mpfumu chief *Nwamantibyane* felt that his name was too similar to *ntibu* (diminutive *ntibyane*), a certain antelope. It was henceforth taboo to call this animal *ntibu* in his territory. It had to be called *nguya*. Zihlahla, the father of *Nwamantibyane*, had gone even further than his son; his counsellors complained that he gave them no meat to eat, keeping all for himself. "He is a dog," they said. The chief overheard the remark and took action in the following decree: "Let it be known all over the country that *mbyana*, the dog, is I. When you pronounce this word, you will be referring to your chief. I therefore command you hereafter to call real dogs *kalawana*." And this was done for some time. So, in Nondwane, people proclaimed as taboo the verb *ku phunga*, to sprinkle, and replaced it by *ku kweba*, which means to drink, in order not to offend *Maphunga*. This custom of showing respect by avoiding the use of the name of a chief in connexion with ordinary objects, is even extended to other men, if they are of particular note. So a great personage of the Maputju clan having been named *Mahlahla*, which means small branches, these had to be called *mavinda*. The prohibition to pronounce the name of the chief can go so far that even names of deceased chiefs are taboo, at least in the Bilen region. So the petty chief of *Rikatla* had been called *Muzila* after the great Ngoni chief, son of *Manukosi* and father of *Gungunyana*. But people used to call him *Mbozin*, fearing lest the warriors of Bilen might say: "What is this? Where have you hidden him? Show us *Muzila*. We assert that he died long ago!"

171 These are traces of the *hlonipha* custom, which is, however, not so much developed amongst Thongas as amongst Zulus.

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⁶⁹⁵ The name of the chief is sacred in so far as it is generally used
⁵⁵¹ in oaths. When asked to swear, a Nondwane man will say :
 "Maphunga!" (1)

II. The Regalia.

⁶⁴³ Kings everywhere like to adorn themselves with specially
 imposing objects, insignia of their office, which differentiate them
 from their subjects. The Thonga chiefs have no peculiar crown
 — the shidlodlo belonging to all adults (p. 129)—, no special
 garment, no sceptre and no throne. We sometimes translate
 by the word throne *shilubelo* viz., the place where one *luba*, pays
 the tax; but this is only a hut smaller than the others and subjects
 can also possess it. (See page 313). However there are, in some
 of these small kingdoms, royal objects which may be called regalia
 (*bukosi bya hosi*).

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³⁰¹ Amongst the Nkunas, the chief possesses a large copper bracelet
 called *ritlatla*, which was bought a very long time ago, in Lourenço
 Marques, by the Nkuna clan in exchange for tusks of elephants,
 says Mankhelu. According to others, the *ritlatla* was made in old
 times by Natives from the copper, or perhaps from the gold dug by
 them. The *ritlatla* was in the hands of the elder branch of the
 Nkuna clan; Hoshana was its headman, but he had fled into the
 Nwamba country during the troubled period of 1855 to 1860.
 When he died, his people brought the *ritlatla* to the chief Shiluvane
 who belonged to a younger branch, thinking that, at his death, the
ritlatla together with the chieftainship would be given back to

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⁶⁸¹ (1) Kidd, in his *Kafir Socialism*, has asserted that Bantu chiefs are very jealous
 and kill their subjects when they become too rich and thus overshadow them. This
 may be the case in other tribes or when a military government has taken the place of
 the old patriarchal system. Amongst the Thongas it is not true. My informants could
 not quote a single instance of a murder committed by a chief for that reason alone.
 I heard of Shiluvane killing a subject called Muhluluni who had acquired too much
 power; but Muhluluni had declared that he wanted to usurp the chieftainship; so it was
 a case of high treason! A rich *aduna*, in the territory of Nhandja (Nondwane), was
 also killed and his oxen taken by the chief because he had tried to abduct one of the
 chief's wives. But many headmen had as many oxen as Maphunga and were not
 troubled by him on that account: "Why should he hate them? They could not harm
 him, as he was protected by the supernatural powers, and they brought him all the
 more beer as they had plenty of wives and consequently of meals!"

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301 them. But they were disappointed in their hope : Shiluvane kept both the ritlatla and the power and bequeathed them to his son, Muhlaba, as we shall see. Legends are current about the ritlatla. It is said to be able to move of its own will. "This piece of metal is indeed a wonderful thing," wrote a young Nkuna, to me "because when it is buried in the soil, as black people are in the habit of doing with their treasures, a piece of iron must be put inside it to prevent it from going away; if this precaution is not taken, the ritlatla may leave the place where it was and go somewhere else. In the space of one year, it may go as far as the Masetana spruit (about one mile)."

643 Another royal property of the Nkuna family was an *elephant's tusk*, which vanquished enemies had brought as a token of their submission.

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302 In Nondwana, the old chief Papele who preceded Maphunga
787 and lived in the middle of the last century, wore a *kind of chignon* or bun made by plaiting his hair, which was a sign of royalty (*shifoko*). But this custom has passed away. There was also a *long stick* which was kept exposed to the smoke of the royal fire in the sacred hut of *nyokwekulu*, which I shall describe presently, and which was called *ntjobo* and also *mhamba*, viz., offering; this was evidently of religious value to the clan, and was taken outside when the army assembled. It possessed the power of becoming invisible to enemies. Moreover this magical stick was very useful because it warned the clan when some danger was threatening. The *ntjobo* was then put into a fire; if it did not burn, this showed that the clan had nothing to fear from its enemies; if it burned, it meant that the clan would be attacked and defeated. Then another stick would be prepared and put into the fire with the hope that it would resist it.

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778 We shall speak in Part VI of another sacred *mhamba* which most of the Thonga clans possessed, made of the nails and hair of the deceased chiefs in the Tembe clan, and of the dried skin of their faces in the Shirindja clan. It was used as a means of propitiation in national calamities. In the Khosen country, the chief also possessed the *mhamba*. This was a mysterious object which the clan had always possessed, from time immemorial, from the beginning

643 "when the Ba-Khosa had emerged from the reed" (See Vol. II,
 604 Part VI, III). Nobody might see it except the chief, who kept it
 778 hidden somewhere in a hole amongst the rocks. His uterine
 nephew alone (ntukulu) knew the place, and when it was necessary
 to use it in order to pray to the deceased chiefs, the chief and his
 nephew alone were permitted to approach the hiding place; those
 643 who accompanied them had to stop at a distance. This mhamba
 778 is lost. Even the chief Ntshongi, who was the paramount chief of
 789 the Ba-Khosa at the beginning of this century, had never seen it.
 It had been taken by his predecessor Mavabaze and had disappeared
 during the political troubles of the Gungunyana's war. Thus it is
 impossible to say of what it consisted, and this will probably never
 be known. There is no doubt however, that it was used for the
 same purpose as the mhamba of the Tembe and Shirindja. Its
 magical and religious power came from the fact that it was anointed
 with the "nsila" of the deceased chiefs. On the death of a chief,
 his "nsila" i. e. the layer of filth resting on his body, was taken
 away and the mhamba was rubbed with it. This gave the reigning
 [769] chief the power to influence his ancestor-gods, in accordance with
 the magic principle: the part influences the whole. It is said that
 in former times the Khosa chief Shihanyisane having ill-treated his
 two younger brothers, Malashwane and Shalati, these two men
 succeeded in taking the chieftainship away from him with the aid
 of the Nwamba clan. Eventually Shihanyisane made peace with
 his brothers and gave over the mhamba to Malashwane: a proof
 that this mysterious object was in truth considered as the most
 important attribute of chieftainship.

643 These regalia are not indeed very imposing to the eye. Thonga
 789 royalty had no brilliant insignia... But it had more than that!
 751 Each clan possessed a special medicine whose magical virtues were
 greatly esteemed; its possession made the chief invincible, the
 warriors invulnerable, the country unconquerable. This powerful
 charm is called *mbhulo* (Dj.), *mphulo* (Ro.).

Amongst the Nkunas, the *mbhulo* is called *Nwantikhalala*. It
 is kept by those belonging to the Mushwane house, and a man
 called Papalati is responsible for it. It consists of four calabashes,
 two male and two female (medicines are considered as having sex.

642 see Part VI) called Madyakakulu, Nwahondyane, Mbengatamilomu,
 789 Masemane. The bones are always consulted to ascertain which
 751 calabash (nhungubane) must be employed. The uses of this
 medicine are as follows. Every year it is mixed with the first
 fruits in the ceremony of *luna*, which will be described later on.
 In war time the mbhulo is employed to "fence the country."
 Envoys go to all the drifts on the boundary, take stones out of the
 river, smear them with the magical powder and place them on the
 roads, at the crossways; should enemies invade the country, they
 will be deprived of their strength. The weapons also are sprinkled
 with a decoction made of this royal medicine, as we shall see, and it

643 is given to the chief to prevent disease. The father of Papalati was
 687 accused of having sold some of this powerful national drug
 to the Pedi chief Sikororo, an act which amounted to high treason.

643 I have been fortunate enough to be informed of all the rites
 connected with the royal medicine in the Marwaya clan. There, it
 is called *nyokwekulu*, a word which is probably derived from the
 verb *ku nyuka*, to melt. Let Mboza tell us, with awe and profound
 conviction, of the marvels of this wonderful drug. He was present
 at its preparation in the year 1893, before the war scattered the
 clan and destroyed its military power.

644 Each year the *nyokwekulu* is renewed. Its exact composition
 789 is known only to one man, Godlela, the royal magician and priest,
 to whom the care of preparing it is entrusted. This man belongs
 to the house, or sub-clan, of Tlhatlha. He is very much feared.
 Nobody dares to dispute with him, and he has the right of cursing
 even the chief. His function is *hereditary*. His father Malubatilo
 was in charge of the *nyokwekulu* before him. The law of
 succession is this; when the elder brother dies, the position is
 held by his younger brother. The headmen of the tribe box his
 ears and say to him: "You will be the master of the medicine!
 Take great care of it." When all the brothers are dead, it passes
 to the sons.

So, when the right time of the year has come, the chief
 consults the bones. The first thing to do is to send messengers
 all over the country to find a *forked branch*, a "shiphandje," to
 which the calabash containing the medicines will be hung.

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789 The royal drug, having been burnt, is reduced to powder and this powder is poured into the calabashes. The forked branch is planted in the sacred hut, which I shall shortly describe, and the calabashes hung upon it. Each sub-chief receives a calabash and takes it to his kraal, where it will help the district in which he reigns to perform the *luma* ceremony. But the greater part of the powder remains at the capital. There it will be used not only for the *luma*, and for the sprinkling of the warriors (see Chapter IV), but also for two other purposes: 1) for the protection of the country by means of the wooden pegs; 2) for the filling up of the magical horn.

1) *The wooden pegs* (*timhiko*). A certain day is fixed for planting the forked branch in the house where the great medicine is kept. Then the doctor, accompanied by some members of the royal family, steals out secretly during the night and goes to the cross-ways, to the strategic points on the borders of the Mazwaya territory. It is taboo for anyone to meet with the party. He plants wooden pegs, and smears them with the powder. As soon as they have been smeared, they become invisible. No one can see them nor tear them out except Godhela. They do not rot. White ants do not attack them. The country is fenced by them.

Should there be any dispute as regards the boundaries of the country, Godhela will be called. At once the pegs which were invisible appear; they come out as much as a foot above the ground. If a hostile army was approaching, it will turn back at once, seized with fear at the sight of these pegs.

789 2) *The magical horn*. The remainder of the powder is mixed
825 with a special kind of honey, the honey made by the small black
787 bee called *mbonga*. This bee makes a large spherical nest deep in the ground. Natives have a number of superstitions regarding it. They say the *mbonga* honey may be eaten by anybody, but it is only members of certain families who can see the nest and dig for it. For other people it is invisible. (See Part VI.) The Ngwetsa family, in Rikatla, was one of the favoured ones! It must be said that the hole through which the *mbonga* bees penetrate into the soil is in truth very small and escapes the notice

789 of most people! This honey comes from below. It is a hidden,
 823 a mysterious thing. A little of it is added to the drug and the
 781 mixture is poured into a double horn, viz., two horns whose large
 ends are firmly fixed to each other, the point where they meet
 being carefully covered with dung, which acts as glue. A hole
 has been made in the upper horn and the drug is introduced
 through this. It is a great means of divination. When war is
 imminent, the nyokwekulu begins to ferment, and exudes through
 the hole: "It knows all about war." So the country can prepare
 for it. No wonder that this powerful medicine is preserved with
 superstitious awe and the greatest care.

643 A place of honour is reserved for the magical horn in the
 395 hut of the first wife of the chief. In the middle of the hearth
 372 a perpetual fire burns; it must never be allowed to go out; it
 824 is taboo. The wood used for it must be that of a tree found
 on the sea shore, and called ntjobori. The Makaneta sub-clan
 must furnish it regularly. It is taboo to take embers from this
 fireplace, which is called the royal fire, the medicinal fire
 (ndjilo wa buhosi, wa muri). Should the principal wife let
 the fire go out, then Godlela must be called on to light it again,
 rubbing together two sticks of a shrub called ntjopfa. The
 fire produced by burning this shrub is considered dangerous.
 It is taboo to cut its branches or to use them for the purpose
 of warming oneself; the genitalia are said to swell when this
 law is transgressed (See Part IV). But Godlela does not fear;
 has he not his drugs to protect himself? He can and must
 use ntjopfa to re-light the nyokwekulu fire, and he will be
 given a good reward for his work! The ntjobori, in burning,
 produces an abundant smoke which leaves a deposit on the horn,
 on the forked branch and on all the calabashes containing the
 provision of powder.

643 The queen Mimpanyanhoba who was in charge of the
 372 nyokwekulu had no sexual relations with the chief on that account.
 595 I do not know if absolute continence is always enforced on the
 784 keeper of the sacred fire, as was the case for the Roman Vestal
 Virgins. But I have been told by Mboza that this woman
 prevented her co-wives from coming near her hut; it was taboo.

643 The grass of the roof of this hut must never be removed, though
784 it may rot owing to the rains. It is taboo. One simply puts
356 a layer of new grass over the old one, a thing which is rarely
done in the case of ordinary roofs.

643 In case of war, should the clan be obliged to leave the country,
789 a special little hut is hastily built in the bush and the precious
722 medicine is deposited therein. There is no fear that the enemy
will take it, either Whites or Natives, because this hut also has
the attribute of invisibility. This happened during the war of
1894 (1). In the case of the *mhamba* of the Tembe and Zihlahla
clans it is different; the man who keeps it must run away with it
and with the chief.

643 Such are the laws of the *mphulo*. This great medicine may
789 certainly be regarded as a part of the regalia, and the most
important part. It is, for the chief and sub-chiefs, a means of
strengthening their authority, as will be seen in the description of
the *luma* rite. On the other hand the *mphulo* is a collective
possession, the powerful magic means by which the clan resists
its enemies or conquers them. It occupies the very centre of the
national life.

789 In the Manyisa clan the war-medicine is called *mabophe*, and is
726 kept by a man called Chikiza, who belongs to the Ntjeko clan, not
643 to the royal family. He is said to have inherited it from his
787 forefathers. The medicine however belongs to the chief. It is
administered as follows. The *nanga* prepares small heaps of
wood on the road, pours a little of the drug over them, sets fire to
them and the warriors tread on the embers and extinguish the fire
with their feet. This makes them invulnerable or at least protects
them against fatal wounds. When they are ready to start for
battle, the bones are thrown, and give the following intimation :

643 "Do not kill the first enemy you meet with, but catch him alive, be
789 it a man or a woman, and bring him to the chief." The chief,
726 accompanied by some indumas, must stab him outside the royal
kraal; the body of the deceased enemy will then be cut open, and

(1) In the Nondwane the *nyokwakulu* is still kept by the heir of Maphunga, Magomasyana. The new chief, the usurper, tried to find it, but Godlela refused to give it to him. Thus Mabvasha has no *mphulo*.

789 the fat collected in order to mix it with the war medicine, the flesh
726 being left to the dogs to eat and destroy.

643 In some clans, chiefs possess other personal charms which are
789 very much dreaded and called *psitjemba*. So, in the Maluleke
237 clan, each of the children of the ancient chief Mashakadzi received
 from him one of these *psitjemba*. It consists of a part of the
 skull of a child, the top of the head, where the pulse is seen
 beating at the fontanella. This has been smeared with the
 vitreous humour taken from the eyes of lions or elephants, and
 powders made from the skins of wild beasts. The possession of
 this charm gives the chief a supernatural power. If, being
 irritated with you, he invokes his gods by sucking it and emits the
 sacramental *tsu*, he can call on any wild beast he likes to kill you...
 He has sacrificed with the *psitjemba*; you will die!

643 Some chiefs of the Northern clans used to swallow one of the
787 stones found in the stomach of a crocodile. It is said that
825 crocodiles, when cut open, are found to contain a certain number
 of stones, as they are supposed to eat one each year, when the rainy
 season comes on. One of them is chosen and smeared with
 special medicines and swallowed by the chief. Natives firmly
 believe that this stone remains in the body of the chief, and
 that it is "his head, his life" (Viguet). When it is passed in his
 stools the first time, this is a premonitory warning. When it
 occurs a second time, it is a clear announcement that the chief is
 about to die. So chiefs can always know when their time is near.
 In other clans the crocodile stone is replaced by what is called
ndjalama. Amongst Nkunas this word designates a kind of bright
 copper button, which the Pedis of the Palaora mine used to make
 and sell. But *ndjalama* also means large sized beads. Whatever
 it is, some chiefs swallowed the *ndjalama* and were warned by
 it of their death. This object, as well as the crocodile stone, is
 taboo for subjects to swallow. They would die. It is "*buloyi*
bya hosi" — "the magical power of the chief."

643 On account of these powerful and dangerous charms possessed
619 by them, chiefs of different clans regarded it as a taboo to stay
 in each other's company; they were afraid lest they might be
 killed by the magical power of their colleagues. Maphunga

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619 seems to have been particularly feared. He had even bought poison from white people and is said to have killed his rival, Musongi, chief of the Maputju clan, with whom he fought the battle of Malangotiba in 1870. He sent a woman of bad life to Maputju. The woman succeeded in winning the confidence of the king and poured this poison into his glass. Nowadays the Ronga chiefs have been taught by the Authorities to sit in council when discussing matters.

643 The two principal prerogatives of the chief are the right of *luma* and taxation.

III. *The right of luma, and the first fruits rites.*

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241 We come to a set of rites which might be dealt with when considering the Agricultural life, but I prefer to describe them here, as they provide us with a typical illustration of the constitution of the clan; they are highly characteristic of the Bantu community, a community which is essentially agricultural in its pursuits, animistic in its beliefs, and hierarchic as regards its social and national life.

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262 We have already met with the word *luma* and noticed that
784 its ordinary meaning is *to bite*; its ritual sense is to *remove the*
527 *injurious character of a given food by a certain ceremony.* The *luma*
241 is a necessity before eating the flesh of certain wild beasts, as we shall see when studying the laws of hunting (See Part IV). But it is of still more importance, and one of the great laws of the clan, that the official *luma* shall take place before the subjects eat the products of the new year. There seem to be two ideas at the root of this strange taboo:

- 1) To eat certain kinds of food is dangerous for one's health, and the first mouthful taken must be seasoned with the royal drug.
- 2) The gods, the chief, and elder brothers, have a prior right to enjoy the products of the soil. To precede them in doing this is a sin which would bring them misfortune. The hierarchy must be absolutely respected.

643 The law of luma seems to have applied to all kinds of food
 262 in former times. Nowadays it is not observed for the following
 171 products: maize, Kafir beans and peas, rice, sorghum, water
 627 melons (makalabatla) and monkey nuts. It is partly observed
 241 for mafureira almonds (tihuhlu), strychnos paste (fuma) and
 pumpkin leaves (magawane). It is strongly enforced for black
 Kafir corn and bukanye. Such is at any rate the case in the four
 clans of Nondwane, Mabota, Nwamba and Tembe. Amongst the
 Zulus and Swazis on the contrary, I have been told people luma
 maize and do not luma kafir corn. Kafir corn is probably the
 most ancient cereal amongst the Ba-Thonga, and bukanye has
 always existed in the country. This is perhaps the reason why
 these luma rites, which bear a very old character, are still applied
 to these products to the exclusion of other more modern cereals.

I. *The luma without a religious ceremony.*

631 Let us first study the less ritualistic kind of luma, the luma
 262 of the mafureira almond, for instance. It is practised in each
 643 sub-chief's village, and, though it is tending to become obsolete,
 527 it is still enforced by some "tihosana." Thus my neighbour in
 Rikatla, Habele, the hosana placed by Mobvesha over this part
 of the territory, met some time ago a boy who was eating these
 almonds, the description of which I shall give later on.—
 "Who gave them to you?" asked Habele... The child kept
 silent.—"Come with me to your parents!" Having found their
 home, the sub-chief scolded them severely: "You have started
 sucking (munya) the almonds before us. You wanted to kill my
 head? Pay a fine!" They answered: "The birds made them
 fall from the tree... The children were not guilty!" However
 they had to pay 500 reis.

262 The luma of almonds, which takes place in December, when
 643 they are ripe, is performed in the following way. The almonds
 527 are dipped into a small calabash full of water to soften them.
 Some of the powder of the nyokwekulu is added to them. The
 headman first takes some for himself and then distributes them to
 his people. They suck the almonds, take in their hands the part

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which is not eaten, and rub their faces with it. But *no religious ceremony is performed*. It is the same for the *fuma*, a paste made with the contents of the kwakwa fruit, a kind of *Strychnos* very similar to the nsala, but of a different taste. The ceremony was even more simple than with the almonds; the chief used to send a little of this paste to each village saying: "Let this be the first bite you swallow: the new year has come!" (Luman, ku tlhese nguba.) No powder was used in connexion with it. The magical drug was used, on the other hand, when the luma of pumpkin leaves took place.

II. The luma of the Kafir corn.

262 The great, the official luma, amongst the Ronga clans, is that
643 performed for the Kafir corn (mabele). The great wife of
782 the chief grinds the first grains of Kafir corn reaped in the fields.
769 She cooks the flour in a pot and pours into it some of the royal
796 powder kept in the calabash, so as to make a *shimhimbi* (See
page 42). The chief takes a little of the food and offers it to the
spirits of his ancestors, at the main entrance of the royal kraal.
He prays to them in the following terms: "Here has the new year
come! Precede us, you gods, and luma, so that, for us also,
Kafir corn shall help our body, that we may become fat, not thin,
that the witches may increase the corn, make it to be plentiful, so
that, even if there is only a small field, big baskets may be filled!
(Nguba hi yoleyi! Rangan n̄wine, mi luma, n̄wi Psikwembu!
Na hine, mabele ma tjhama amirin yeru psinene, hi kuluka hi nga
wondji. Abaloyi ba yandjisa, pai tala ngopfu, nambi shi shisi-
n̄wanyana shi shiwe, a ku tale tingula!)"

262 After this religious ceremony everyone luma in turn, the chief
643 first, then the sub-chiefs, then the counsellors, then the warriors
796 who have killed enemies in battle, then the headmen of the kraals
554 who have all been summoned to the capital. Should one of
609 the headmen be prevented from coming by illness, his younger
brother will not precede him. He will bring him the *shimhimbi*
in a leaf; the elder will take it, and, after him, the other brothers.
Women do not eat the magic powder. Neither do strangers,

262 even those who are settled in the clan. They have their own
643 medicine and luma for themselves, though they must not do it
609 before the chief of the country.
796

III. *The luma of bukanye and the great national feast.*

137 The most characteristic of all these ceremonies connected with
273 the first fruits is the luma of bukanyi. Tobane has given me a
796 circumstantial description of this feast and it deserves to be
824 reproduced in all its details, as being a typical manifestation of
Bantu national life.

The *nkanye* (1) is a large tree, one of the finest in the country. Its botanical name is *Sclerocarya caffra* (Sond); it is generally known amongst the English of Natal as the Kafir plum.

It bears fruit of the size of a greengage, which when ripe is a beautiful golden yellow and has a strong flavour of turpentine and a penetrating odour. It is a dioecian tree, the male bearing bunches of flowers while the female has single flowers. The Natives are quite aware of this; they cut down the male plants but take care to keep a few in each district to fecundate the female. The fruit — the *kanye* — begins to ripen in the month of January and falls to the ground. The odour is perceptible everywhere, and it is then that the principal men of the country approach the chief and say to him: "The time has come to luma."

In the luma of the bukanye it is easy to discover four consecutive ceremonies:

a) *The luma of the gods and of the chief.*

262 The first ripe makanye are gathered and pressed at the capital,
782 and the sour liquor thus obtained is poured out on the tomb
of the deceased chiefs in the sacred wood; they are invoked to
273 bless this new year and the feast which is about to be celebrated.
796

(1) *Nkanye*, plural *minkanye*, is the tree in question. *Kanye*, plural *makanye*, is the fruit of this tree; *bukanye* is the drink made from this fruit. In the same way the wild apricot tree is called *mphimbi*, plural *mimphimbi*. The fruit *himbi*, plural *ma-himbi*; the drink made from the fruit, *buhimbi*.

796 gait, brandishing sticks with pieces of red cloth attached as
 273 pennants. They are in search of full barrels! It must be said
 786 that the inebriety produced by the bukanye is of a rather
 mild type, as this Native beer contains very little alcohol; but
 the quantity absorbed is so enormous that it ends by going to
 their heads: this is more especially so with the bukanye brewed
 from a species of nkanye called *nunge*, which appears to be stronger
 and more intoxicating.

796 How far does sexual licence go during the bukanye? Not to
 273 the point of general promiscuity, as amongst the Ba-Pedi after the
 833 circumcision school. However many cases of adultery occur.
 786 Men and women forget the elementary rules of conduct. They
 attend to the wants of nature in the same places, which is taboo
 under ordinary circumstances: "Nau a wa ha tiyi,"—"the law is
 no longer in force."

796 Still, in the midst of all this carnival, the payment of the tax
 273 must not be forgotten... This is the time to carry to the chief
 643 the liquor which is flowing so freely on all sides, but of which
 637 he claims the lion's share. Each petty chief sends his people
 to the capital with brimming jars. This is termed "lumisa
 hosi," supplying the chief with new wine. The women do not
 enter the capital at once, but go to one of the counsellors, who
 promptly abstracts a couple of jars for his own use. The chief
 returns one or two jars to the carriers, as they have come a long
 way and are doubtless thirsty; the remainder will be kept to
 refresh the very numerous guests at the Court; any coming
 from afar will spend the night and not return until the next
 day. I have seen a company of these women carrying baskets
 539 full of makanye to Muzila. How graceful was the Indian
 file winding its way along the path and singing, amongst others,
 the following chorus: (See for further particulars *Chants et*
Contes des Ba-Ronga, page 46.)

Chwe! Chwe! Hi laba shimungu — Leshi ka — Le tilwen!
 Chwe! Chwe! Shimungu hi mani? — Hi Mzila! — Hi Mzila!
 Hi! Hi! We seek the hawk! — Who soars — In the sky!
 Hi! Hi! Who is the hawk? — It is Mzila! — It is Mzila!

539 There is quite a collection of these carriers' songs praising the chiefs. Mzila (or Muzila), whom we saw a short time back scaring sparrows, is here compared to the mythical lightning bird, to the hawk that swoops down from the clouds. (See Part VI.) Why does he not once for all annihilate the sparrows which pillage his fields of sorghum? But this is poetry! and there is often a wide gap between poetry and reality!

d) The feasting of the chief in the villages.

796 The fourth and final act of the bukanye feasting in which, as we have seen, the chief plays a prominent part, is the *nsungi* which 273 may be called the "fin de saison" orgy. The chief now returns 643 the visits of his subjects and casks of beer are prepared for him in every village. Dancing and singing are in full swing. He is fêted and acclaimed! But the makanye are getting over-ripe; a new month, a new moon is at hand, which is called *sibandlela* "she who closes the roads;" the paths leading to the foot of the trees become almost impassable, owing to the grass which grows to an incredible height during the rains prevailing at this season. The fine weather is over. Winter is knocking at the door.

796 Amongst the Nkunas the luma ceremony called "to eat the 789 new year" (*dyaka n̄waka*) is performed with a special pumpkin 643 (*kwembe*) cooked at the capital together with the medicine used 262 for rain-making. The chief first eats of it in the evening and 821 makes the sign of a cross on the big drum, which is then beaten to call the people in his village. Then all the men come, bringing the little horns in which they keep the rain medicine (See Part VI). They eat a little and smear the rim of these horns with the medicine; the horns also must "eat the new year." Then everybody can enjoy the products of the harvest. Should anyone precede the chief, this would be fatal to the latter or make him ill... Such is the testimony of Mankhelu. I suspect these rites to have been influenced by the proximity of the Ba-Pedi. "Now we have no longer any first fruits' feast (*mulumo*)," says Mankhelu with some melancholy. "White people have killed it. Everybody

262 eats freely in his house according to his good pleasure. Formerly
821 we used to take the oxen of the man who had dared to steal the
796 new year."

Conclusion on the luma rites.

796 All these luma rites² of first fruits seem to have primarily a religious
782 origin. The Bantus do not feel that they dare enjoy the products of
551 the soil unless they have first given a portion of them to their gods.
 Is it not these gods who make the cereals grow? Have they not
 the power even of controlling the wizards who bewitch the fields?
 These rites are also evidently dictated by the *sense of hierarchy*. A sub-
 ject must not precede his chief nor a younger brother the elder in the
 use of the new harvest, else they would kill those in authority. Such
 an act is against order. We shall see that, even when the seeds are
 sown, the elders must take precedence. But the custom seems also
 to have been actuated by the idea of passage. There is a passage from
 one year to another. For the Thongas, I think the new year begins
805 twice every year: it begins when tilling recommences, in July, August,
796 when the heat returns. This is the hlobo. It begins a second time at
789 harvest, and then there is passage from the food of the last year to the
 food of this year. This is the nguba (Ro.) or ñwaka (Dj.). Though
 the luma rites do not bear all the characteristics of a true passage rite,
 like those of circumcision or moving, we may observe in the
 luma of bukanye a kind of marginal period of general licence, when
 the ordinary laws are more or less suspended. The taking of a first
 mouthful probably signifies the aggregation to the new period, the
 magical powder used on this occasion being a protective measure to
 shield them from the calamities of this unknown year... And after
 all, is it not that feeling of fear which so easily takes possession of the
 heart of man when entering on a new state and starting something
 fresh, which has led the savage to surround the use of the first fruit
 with so many ritual precautions?

IV. Taxation.

643 The chief governs (fuma). *Fuma* means to command, but also
 to live in plenty, to be rich. The subject (nandja, follower)
 obeys; he follows the chief who marches before him just as the
I [see pp. 394-404 in these categories c. in 116-117/2]

643 wife in the path follows her husband who walks at his ease, with
 651 his stick in his hand, whilst she carries his belongings in her basket
 641 on her head... If the prerogative of the chief is to live in abundance, the duty of the subject is to pay taxes! This duty is expressed by the word *luba* (Dj.), *hlenga* (Ro.). It is so true that this is the principal function of the subject that, when a man leaves his clan and goes to live in another clan, he comes to the chief and says: "I want to *luba* or *nkonza* (a word borrowed by the Rongas from the Zulus), to pay the tax..." This is the proper way of making his submission.

643 The explanation of the rites of the first fruits throws much light on the Bantu conception of the chief's position in respect to his subjects. For them he is certainly endowed with the divine right more fully than the King or the Kaiser in any European country; he is the son of the gods, not only their protégé... The gods are the lords of everything... He shares this lordship with them. Hence his right of taxing his subjects. On the other hand we saw that he is the soil! He is more than Lewis XIV, who could say: "L'État c'est moi!" The Bantu chief can say: "I am the earth! — Le sol c'est moi!" Hence, on the part of the subjects, the duty of sharing with him the products of the soil and also of their hunting.

643 The Thonga chief taxes his subjects in four different ways:
 651 he takes a regular portion of the harvest; he claims a part of
 241 most of the wild beasts killed; he makes his people work for him;
 273 he also taxes the revenue of those who go away to work for the Whites. A fifth source of his revenue is found in the fines imposed in judicial cases.

1. As regards taxation of the products of the soil, it consists in a basket (*shihundju*) of mealies contributed by each village at harvest time. This is the regular taxation. Moreover those who brew a great quantity of beer for a feast always send some jars to the chief, especially when the season of tilling the fields or threshing the grain has come. This is not a regular tax, at least amongst the Ba-Ronga, and is considered as *mashobo*, an act of civility, and not as *hlenga* proper. Bukanye must be brought to the capital in great quantities during the great national feast.

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651 In the Northern clans it seems that these payments in kind called *shirwalo* (carrying of beer, from *ku rwala*, to carry), are expected from all those who are not hunters and bring no meat to the capital.

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825 2. The right of the chief *over wild beasts killed in hunting* is not the same for all game. Rhinoceros is not taxed; it is even taboo to bring its meat to the chief. On the contrary when a man has killed a wild buffalo, an elan, a giraffe or an antelope, he must first cut some joints for the chief. If it is a panther or a lion, he must give up the skin; if an elephant, the tusk which scratched the soil when it fell belongs to the chief; it is "the tusk of the soil," and the chief is "the soil." The other tusk is for the hunter (*ndlayi*). In the Maputju country, it was even forbidden to kill elephants. Ngwanazi, the chief who was deported in 1896, had reserved the monopoly of elephant hunting for himself and his warriors. The hippopotamus is taxed more heavily than any other beast. The hunter who has succeeded in killing one has not the right of cutting it open. Should he do so, it would be considered a serious offence. He might be put to death. (Mankhelu.) He must at once send word to the capital, and the men of the Court will come immediately and cut up the animal, taking half the joints to the chief. As for the crocodile, it must also be opened by the men of the Court, because it contains many things such as marvellous stones used in magic, and bracelets of the women whom it has devoured. The chief appropriates what he pleases amongst these objects.

643
466 3. *Statute labour* is one of the main revenues of the royal kraal. In some cases, subjects must come to the capital, led by their sub-chiefs, and till a field for the chief or rather for the queen who has been bought with the nation's money. In Nondwane, which is a large country, each of the sub-clans must till a field for the wives of the chief in its own territory. For instance, in each of the districts of Mapulangu, Bandi, Manuel, Maghebeza, Malwan, Hlangunyingin, the chief Mubvesha possessed a royal field which his subjects weeded and harvested every year, and the sub-chief Habelu, who was in charge of those districts, had to gather the mealies and carry them to the capital. This official tilling is done

⁶⁴³
~~466~~ in the form of a *djimo*. (See Part IV.) Moreover the young men are always at the disposal of the chief to clean his public square, build his huts, repair the thatched roofs of the royal kraal and organise hunting expeditions for him.

⁶⁴³
⁶⁵¹ 4. But the greater part of the royal revenue consists now in money which the chief receives from his subjects. Mubvesha taxes each village a sum of 500 reis besides the regular basket of mealies. At the end of the bukanye feast, each village must send him another 500 reis to notify him that the feast is ended. When a young man returns from Johannesburg having made enough money to lobola a wife, he must leave £ 1.10.0 in the hands of the chief. The latter also recruits boys whom he sends to the recruiting agents, getting as much as £ 1 or £ 1.10.0 per head. When a sub-chief dies, his people inform the paramount chief of his death, bringing a sum of money (1500 reis). The chief, however, does not receive any portion of the inheritance in the case of a death. There is no taxation on the succession.

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⁶⁵¹ 5. A great deal of money comes into the hands of the chief owing to fines which he imposes when acting as supreme judge.
⁶⁸¹ When a plaintiff brings a case and the culprit is condemned to pay him £ 25, Mubvesha keeps £ 10 for himself ; he retains £ 5 if the fine is £ 10.

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⁶³¹
⁶⁵¹ Sub-chiefs do not tax their subjects as a rule. They must bring to their superior all the products of taxation. They do not "eat" anything. But in some cases the chief gives them a part of it. Thus Habele, sub-chief of Rikatla, used to "eat" half of the taxes brought to him by young men coming back from Johannesburg.

V. Dangers and difficulties of the Chieftainship.

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⁶⁵⁴ Endowed with supernatural power which he owes to his magical medicines, feared and sometimes loved by his subjects, with plenty to eat and richer than any of his people, who readily consent to be taxed, the chief occupies an enviable position. The chieftainship (*buhosi*), therefore, is very much sought after and no

643 one refuses to be a chief. Thonga tales recounting the story of
 538 some one who succeeded wonderfully in life often conclude by
 177 saying that this person was given a territory and became a chief...
 554 which seems to be the highest reward of virtue or wisdom. Now-
 adays, however, one may meet with cases where the heir to the
 chieftainship, having become a Christian, renounces that high
 position because he feels that there is an incompatibility between
 the Bantu way of ruling and his new faith.

643 But it would be a great error to think that a Thonga chief is,
 or can be, an autocratic despot. This may have been the case
 with Chaka, Lobengula or Gungunyana, when the tribe became
 an amalgamation of clans held together by military power; in
 order to maintain their usurped authority, these chiefs had to
 be cruel despots. But this is a late development in the Bantu
 political system. I am now only taking into consideration the
 primitive form of tribal life, which is the clan life.

For a chief dangers may arise from three sources: from his
 own character, from the Thonga system of government itself,
 and from the law of succession.

1) THE CHARACTER OF THE CHIEF.

A chief who wishes to succeed in his government *must have a good character*. If he imposes taxation, he must not use his wealth in a selfish way. For instance, when women bring him a *shirwalo* of a dozen pots of beer, he must give them back one or two to quench their thirst. Moreover he must distribute most of the remaining pots to his men, who are on the *bandla*, always ready to share with him the advantages of his position.

Should he buy oxen with the product of the fines, he will be wise to slaughter one from time to time for his counsellors and for the whole clan. A chief who is good (a *ni timsalu*) is said to *maintain* or to *save the country* (*bekisa tiko*). If he does not do that, he is severely criticised. Mubvesha, who used all his money to buy wives, and prevented all the men from seeing them, whilst he himself was too old to content them, was considered

643 a bad chief. He did not even allow "bandla," viz, the gathering of men in the capital, because he was full of jealousy (mona). If he had not been placed in the chieftainship and supported by the White Government, he might have been deposed. Cases in which a chief has been deprived of his right and replaced by another man are not wanting (1). I have even heard of a chief in the Shiridja clan who was put to death. Deposal is generally proclaimed by a council of the royal family.

To reign over a Bantu clan requires much tact, ability and patience. The chief must be a father to his people and not a tyrant (2).

2) THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

643
595 In order to keep in touch with his subjects, a chief generally places his wives in the various provinces of his little kingdom

(1) The annals of the Nkuna tribe provide an instance of the deposal not only of a certain chief but of the elder branch of the royal family, owing to an act which hurt the human feelings of the clan. We have already met with the name of Shithlelana, son of Nkuna, who lived at least 300 years ago. His principal wife was Nwahubyana. In his old age he was very ill and the woman, fearing lest he should die in her hut, drove him away; he was obliged to take refuge in the hut of another of his wives, Nwanimba, mother of Rinono, and died there. Then the headmen assembled and said: "As Nwahubyana has driven away her husband from her hut, she has also driven away the chieftainship from her son. He shall not reign. Rinono shall reign because he is the son of the woman who took care of the sick chief." This story, in which we see the sacred law of succession transgressed for a moral reason, is most interesting because it provides a good illustration of the conception of the clan regarding chieftainship, and proves that, even in ancient times, feelings of humanity could have more weight with the tribe than an article of the royal code.

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524 (2) ~~Very~~ interesting Thonga riddles illustrate this disposition to criticise chiefs. The first riddle enigmatically describes the characteristics of an unworthy chief; it comes from the banks of the Limpopo:

Bupae ga shiule. — Hosi leyi i ni mona...

Some cyclamen flour. — This chief is full of hatred...

The shiule — a word which I translate by cyclamen — is a plant which grows on the ant-hills, bearing large tubercles; these can be cooked and ground into flour; but it is only good in appearance, the taste is unpleasant and nauseating. This chief is bad! He is like that flour! Corruptio optimi pessima!

Here is another riddle which holds the chiefs up to ridicule rather wittily:

Timindji tibri ti rendjeleka tchuka. — Tihoei tibri ti hleba naadja.

Two mice chase one another round an ant-hill (They will never meet)

— Two chiefs malign a subject. (They also will never meet, i. e. agree.)

Each wants to have the last word and will therefore depreciate the arguments of his opponent. He will seek to disprove the statements of the other chief, making fresh ones which the latter will seek to refute in his turn!

643
595 and pays them regular visits, staying some days in these secondary capitals.

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631
171 But a more effective way of holding the country is to place his son or his near relatives as sub-chiefs in all these districts. If the son is still young, the chief will send along with him a trustworthy counsellor to watch over him. Thus, when he dies, and when the elder son is called to the succession, the new chief will have his brothers as co-chiefs or sub-chiefs. Should they be ambitious, should they have acquired some power during the last years of their father's government, they may refuse to obey and proclaim themselves independent. This has happened many times amongst the Rongas. Let me shortly recapitulate the three instances already mentioned. In the Tembe kingdom Maputju, who "ate the foreleg," made himself king of the greater part of the territory. The separated brothers became fierce enemies and often fought against each other, all the more as Tembe greatly resented the revolt of Maputju, and Maputju knew he had not been fair to his elder brother (p. 329). The same thing happened when Matjolo became independent of Mpfumo, his elder brother; both were sons of Nhlaruti. The origin of the war of 1894-1896 was the same; Mubvesha, belonging to the Hlewana branch of the Mazwaya family, wished to become independent... even to take the chieftainship from the elder branch to which Maphunga and his successor Mahazule belonged.

So the Thonga clan has a tendency to fall to pieces, just like the Thonga village, and it requires a good deal of firmness and diplomacy on the part of a chief to keep his kingdom intact.

3) THE LAW OF SUCCESSION.

643 Its main provision is this; when a chief dies, his elder son is the regular heir, but all his younger brothers must reign before the son, the true heir, is crowned. This system attempts to reconcile two principles, which we have already met with as governing the family life: 1) the absolute preeminent right of the elder branch, 2) the community of property amongst brothers.

643 But whilst they may be reconciled in ordinary life, these two principles become antagonistic when carried into politics, and this law of succession has been the source of endless disturbances amongst the Thonga clans. It is true that the younger brothers of the chief, when taking his place, are looked on more or less as princes regent, holding office on behalf of their nephew, who is the lawful heir to the throne. They are said to "make him grow" (*kurisa*) to "keep his tumbler" (*hlayisa ndyelo*).

But if the former chief died in youth, and if his younger brother has lived and reigned for a long time, and has become very popular, he is very much tempted to appropriate the chieftainship for his own family and to order the tribe to crown his son, to the exclusion of the son of the first chief, who belonged to the elder branch, but who has been more or less forgotten during all these years. This leads to conflicts and fighting. The lawful heir will contest (*banga*, a Zulu word) and a *mubango* (civil war) will follow. Or, if he is not able to fight, he will keep to himself, full of bitterness, and ready to seize the first opportunity of asserting his rights.

643 Such a usurpation has twice taken place in the Nkuna tribe.
175 It is not easy to know exactly what happened, because there
721 are conflicting statements. Those who hold the chieftainship do not tell the story in the same way as those who consider that they were robbed of their right. This is the testimony of one of the latter, Mbokota, son of Madjubane. There were three brothers, Hoshana, Mbangwa and Ribye (1). During

(1) Genealogy of the Nkuna family showing why and how contests arose for the succession.



The names of the chiefs who reigned are thus underlined —————
 The names of those who were deprived of the chieftainship, thus —————

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721 the disturbances caused by the Ngoni invasion, Hoshana fled to the Nwamla country and lost touch with the main body of the clan which settled in the Transvaal. He however possessed the *ritlatla* (p. 385). On his death the royal appanage was brought to Shiluvane, but it never went back to Hoshana's children, who lost their right for ever. Mbangwa had three children, a daughter, Tibatiba, and two sons, Nyantsiri and Shiluvane. On his death, his younger brother Ribye reigned. He died, and then the chieftainship came back to Mbangwa's children. In the meantime Nyantsiri had died, but he had left two children, Madyubane and Mapsakomo. Madyubane, the elder, was still a child. So Tibatiba, the elder sister, said to Shiluvane: "Take the elephant tusk belonging to the Nkuna royal family and reign in the place of Nyantsiri; but you have only to 'keep the tumbler' of Madyubane." Shiluvane sold the tusk and bought wives, beads and clothing for himself. Madyubane died some years later; but he had a younger brother, Mapsakomo, and also a son called Mbokota. The chieftainship ought certainly to have returned to the elder branch. Mbokota told me himself that Shiluvane, before he died, ordered his counsellors to proclaim him as chief. So, on Shiluvane's death, a great contest arose. The headmen came to the capital and asked which son of Shiluvane had been designated by the late chief as his successor. No one dared reply, because there were four men who claimed the chieftainship: Mapsakomo, a younger brother of the legal heir Madyubane, Mbokota the son of Madyubane, Muhlabi and Muholo, both sons of Shiluvane. The great counsellor Shikhibane then said: "I heard Shiluvane say he wished Muhlabi to reign." The headmen accepted this statement, but the other pretenders greatly resented it. Seeing that many Ba-Nkuna were opposed to Muhlabi, Shikhibane assembled the whole tribe in arms to proclaim his protégé. He wanted the army itself to manifest its will. Mbokota, Mapsakomo and Muholo protested. But the warriors took Muhlabi, who was still a young man, and brought him to his new residence in an epic march all through the country during which they sang the war songs. The contest was finally settled by the Boer Authorities: Captain Dahl, then Native Commissioner for Zoutpansberg.

⁶⁴³₁₇₅ confirmed the choice of Muhlaba. The Pedi queen Magayibia, of the Nyarin clan, also asserted that she had heard Shiluvane designate this young man as his successor, and the other pretenders were obliged to keep quiet. But they remained very discontented (1).

I have seen another similar case of the elder branch losing its right on account of a younger brother placing his son on the throne, to the exclusion of the legal heir. It happened amongst the Ba-ka-Baloyi who took refuge in the Mudjadjji country. The sons of Nkami, younger brother of Shitshabe, tried to seize the chieftainship to the detriment of Munyamana, son of Shitshabe, and this gave rise to a war in consequence of which, however, Munyamana regained his right. (See S. A. A. A. S. Report of the Meeting of 1905. Vol. III, page 251.)

All these facts tend to show that the position of the chief is attended with many dangers and difficulties, not to mention those which arise from the presence of the White Government, with which I shall deal later on.

⁶⁴³ So it must be recognised that the Thongas have not been able to discover a political system guaranteeing the peace of the country in a satisfactory way. The habit of dividing the power between brothers who soon become rivals, and of allowing the younger brothers to reign before the legal heir, both tend to destroy the unity of the clan and give rise to quarrels and unrest. Another bad consequence of these features of the royal right is this; a chief, when he ascends the throne, will do his best to get rid of troublesome brothers in order to reign alone and to ensure the chieftainship to his son. This has often happened, especially in the case of Maphunga, chief of Nondwane, who killed as many as four brothers or near relations: Sitjobela, Nwanambalana, Zulu and

(1) I remember one day paying a visit to Mbokota, and hearing him complain bitterly about his fate. He had tried to show his independence by establishing a separate circumcision school for his people so that they should not go to the "sungu" of Muhlaba. The chief did not prevent him from doing this, but he had just sent a messenger to claim the fees paid by the boys. Mbokota was much grieved at being obliged to remit them, and, if he had had enough men, he would certainly have revolted. But he had but a handful of warriors. He was not popular amongst the tribe, so he did not think it wise to "banga" and eventually submitted to Muhlaba.

643 Cigiseka. The last named was very courageous, and the cunning Maphunga succeeded in poisoning him treacherously, through the agency of a dissolute woman.

E. DEATH.

643 When a chief has grown very old, he no longer goes out of [763] the royal hut. His counsellors take his place in the management of affairs and he dies surrounded by mystery. It must be so, as his death must remain unknown during a whole year. "We reap and we bow down (korama)" viz. "we till the ground and reap again before the event is made public (palusha)" says Mankhelu.

So the chief is buried during the night; no lamentations are heard; his wives and his grave-diggers undergo the purification ceremonies and take the vapour baths in secret. It may be that the wives who dwell in remote places will not hear a word of their husband's death. The fire of the royal hut will not be kindled in the usual and ritual way, but it will be kept burning the whole year. The decease is formally announced to some few individuals, to the White Government officials, to the heir (who views the corpse), and to the counsellors, but the rest of the country is supposed to be in ignorance of the occurrence. Of course the secret will not be kept absolutely. The truth will leak out... But no one will dare to speak openly on the subject (1).

643 A special hut is set apart into which the counsellors enter under 645 pretext of discussing matters of state with the chief, who is said to be very ill and unable to show himself. As a matter of fact, he has been buried for some time.

(1) I was staying at Nondwane when Maphunga, the chief who succeeded Mahombe, died, and I heard on several occasions, in June and July 1891, the warriers practising on their antelope horns the air to be played when the mourning should be made public. The death must have occurred during 1890, but nothing was said about it. After the news had been published, Manganyela, a young brother of the district of Libombo, remarked to me one day: "When last season (about Xmas 1890) we saw the miphimbi (trees bearing fruit similar to an apricot) so heavily laden with fruit, (there had been an exceptionally heavy crop), we felt sure the chief must have died and that he had sent us this plentiful supply..." A typical remark, aptly illustrating the semi-ignorance in which the tribe is kept of the death of the chief.

⁶⁴³ What is the reason for this silence? According to the old
~~643~~ men I consulted, it is to prevent enemies taking advantage of the
 766 confusion consequent on the death of the chief to attack the
 country. Undoubtedly this custom is also intended to give the
 principal counsellors time to prepare for the installation of the
 new chief and to prevent bloody contests.

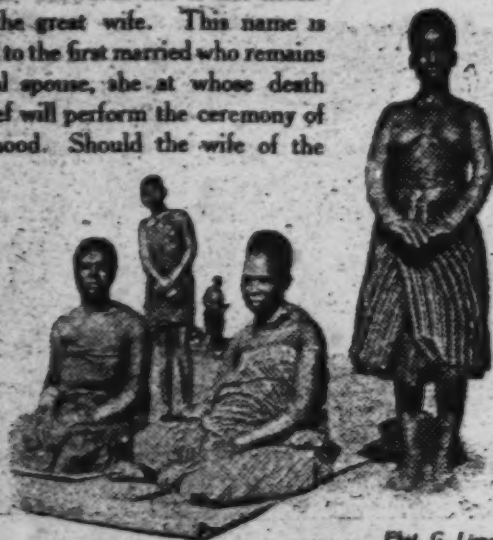
⁶⁴³ The grave of the chief does not differ from those of his subjects.
 766 As it has been dug secretly in the sacred wood (ntimu), its whereabouts
 are not known to most of the people. In some clans
 or sub-clans the earth of the tumulus is levelled, so that no sign
 whatever remains to show where the body has been buried.
 This is said to be done in order to prevent enemies from exhuming
 the corpse and cutting off the ears, the diaphragm and other parts
 of the body to make powerful war-charms (See Chapter IV).
 The graves of the chiefs of Nondwane are said to be invisible,
 just like the hut of the nyokwekulu. They are known by Mago-
 manyana alone (Mboza). (Magomanyana is the nearest relative of
 the late Maphunga, the only brother whom he spared).

When the year of secrecy is over, the official proclamation of
 the mourning is made. (Ba palusha nkosi.) The people come
 to the capital, clan after clan, sounding their fanfares on trumpets
 of antelope horns (bunanga, see Chapter III), and bringing
 with them an ox or a goat. These animals are slaughtered and
 their bladders are presented to the heir, who pins them into his
 hair, so that, without any official proclamation having been made,
 every warrior at once recognises the future chief. All heads are
 shaven in sign of mourning, the adult men remove their wax
 crown (p. 129) and the people are clothed in *malopa* (a blue
 cloth); but as the death is not of recent date and has been known
 more or less for some time, the outward manifestations of grief are
 reduced to a minimum and dances follow in their train. The
 delegates from the adjoining countries also come to express their
 condolences. When all have paid their respects, the mourning is
 really ended (nkosi wu yu!). The King is dead, long live the King!

As we saw, amongst the Nkunas the proclamation of the death
 of a chief is made on the same day as the installation of
 his successor.

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As regards the *queens* (*tinkosikazi*, a Zulu word), the chief's wives, there is not much to say about them. We have seen that one of them occupies a particularly honourable position, having been bought with the people's money and being "the wife of the country," she whose son will be the heir to the chieftainship. However she is not necessarily the great wife. This name is applied to the first married who remains the real spouse, she at whose death the chief will perform the ceremony of widowhood. Should the wife of the



Phot. G. Lingens.

Ngoni Queens.

country die and should she not be the first married, he will not go through that rite on her account.

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Princesses are lobola with more money than ordinary girls. Except in this, they do not differ from them. It is not common for a woman to be called to the dignity of chieftainship amongst the Thongas; in this respect they differ from the Ba-Pedi, or Transvaal Ba-Sutho, who have had many illustrious reigning queens: Modjadji, Male etc. I only know one such case amongst the Rengas, and the queen was still living in 1912. Her name was Midambuzi, daughter of Dambuzi. Dambuzi was the chief of a part of the Mabota country, northward of Lourenço Marques.

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582 On his death, his son Gwaba was put in his place. But he was deported by the Portuguese and his sister, Midambuze, filled the position. Consequently she was not lobola, but chose a husband for herself, a man of common origin (a titlhuba nuna). Her son may succeed her; in this case only can a uterine nephew of a chief take his place.

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847 At Gungunyana's court queens played a great part. This seems to be in accordance with the Zulu custom. After the death of Chaka's mother, sexual relations were taboo for the whole tribe during one year, and children conceived during that time were put to death by order of the chief! (See Colenso: Ten weeks in Natal.)

643 I know of no case in which a foreigner became chief of a clan through having married one of its princesses. He can become hosana, but the true hosana will be his wife and he himself will be but a prince consort. I have heard of two instances in which this happened.

III. *The shipalapala.*

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202 Speaking of the musical instruments of the Court, I must also mention the trumpet of assembly, *shipalapala*, which is the recognised means of summoning the subjects to the capital. The sound of the big drum, though heard at a great distance, cannot reach to the confines of the country. So, when the chief wants his men to assemble at once, he uses the *shipalapala*. This is a horn of mhalamhala, or of nyala or of phifa antelope, the sound of which is like mpu-ù-u (with an accent on the second syllable). The envoy of the chief runs to the capital of a sub-chief, blowing all the time. When he has reached that village, he transmits his message and a young man starts at once with the *shipalapala* of the sub-chief to another district. So, in a short time, notice is given to the whole tribe to assemble.

IV. *Visitors.*

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574 When a stranger passes through the capital, he must sit down outside the central square and at some little distance from it. Some one will come and inquire what he wants; he replies: "I come from such and such a country, and I wish to pay my respects to the chief." Then the counsellor or "Agent General" charged with the affairs of the traveller's country will come and converse with him and announce him (*bika*) to the chief, who will receive him affably and possibly assign him a hut to sleep in, in case he wishes to stay the night, at the same time providing him with food. Should the chief be particularly well disposed towards his guest, he will kill a calf or even an ox for him; and he, on his return, will speak in praise of the hospitality he has received, saying: "The chief made me share his reign," literally: "He made me reign, (a *ndji fumisile*)." Such is the procedure when the respective countries of guest and host are adjoining and the tribes

643 on good and friendly terms. Should relations between them be
 609 at all strained, or should war be imminent, all the roads would be
 574 closed and no one allowed to enter the capital.

V. The *Kondza* custom.

641 The chief is also approached by those who may wish to become
 643 subject to him, to be naturalized; this is called *kondza*, from a
 Zulu word conveying this meaning. The chief will assign to the
 new *nandja* a dwelling place, and he will be incorporated in the
 nation without further ceremony. By this *kondza*, he binds
 himself to pay the taxes (See the story of Mutipi. *Les chants et*
les contes des Ba-Ronga, page 164).

Naturalised strangers, however, do not eat the first fruits
 (*luma*) with the same drug as the people of the country. They
 have their own medicine and take it according to their own
 rules. They are however forbidden to *luma* before the chief
 of their adopted land (p. 397).

VI. Diplomatic relations.

648 We have seen that these are very carefully conducted, each
 262 of the neighbouring clans having one counsellor entrusted with
 726 the care of its affairs. In case of war, friendly clans frequently
 224 make alliances (*shinakulobye*). They send messages to each
 other, or they have special means of communicating news in
 case of war. Supposing, for instance, Nwamba and Nondwane
 should fight against Matjolo. They put two traps at their
 common boundary, on the side of the road, one on the territory
 of Nwamba and one on that of Nondwane. These traps consist
 of a rod bent by a string fastened to the ground. Should the
 army of Matjolo have made an invasion during the night into
 Nwamba territory and put the people to flight, the men of Nwamba

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126 will at once go and undo the trap which is on their side ; in the morning, the people of Nondwane will know that they must also fly.

D. THE TRIBUNAL OF THE CHIEF.

642 In the Thonga Court there is no separation of powers. The legislative, executive, and judicial powers are all in the hands of the chief, aided by his counsellors. The chief is the supreme authority and his decisions are without appeal.

1. *Legislative affairs.*

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583 The chief makes the laws (p. 382) and presides at discussions which end in a resolution. But his counsellors assist him.

Here is an example of such a decision taken at Maphunga's court. There was no uniformity as to the money to be paid for a lobolo, and some fathers claimed as much as £ 20 or £ 30 for their daughters. The great counsellors of the capital decided (tjimba mhaka, viz., to tie the matter) that a lobolo should be £ 15.10 as the maximum. They "tied the matter" with the assent of the chief. Then all the sub-chiefs and counsellors were summoned to the capital. The chief called the roll to ascertain if they were all present. The great counsellor then said to the assembly : "The herds which people claim are too large. Have you gold mines and do you know how to make coins ? Henceforth do not lobola with too much money. £ 15.10 is quite enough !" Every sub-chief, on his return home, called his men and informed them of the decision : "Hi to timhaka ! Such are the matters !" said they. The subjects were disappointed. They wept ! But they had to accept the decision. To oppose it is taboo ! "Paa yilal !"

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671 A native debate or discussion is conducted on very different lines from those to which we are generally accustomed, nothing ever being put to the vote. The chief presides. A proposition is

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put forward in short sentences, generally interrogative, by one of the counsellors. The assembly listens in silence until the mover concludes with an energetic "Ahina," being the equivalent of "That's all right." (See p. 354.) Another individual elaborates the matter further, saying: "Did you not hear what he said? He said so and so." This is the way of seconding the motion. The debate proceeds, and, little by little, objections are brought forward and the assembly comes to a decision.

It often happens that the chief does not say a word; when he sees that the counsellors are agreed and if he has no objection, he merely shows his assent by nodding his head. So the decision is arrived at without his intervention and without any vote being taken. The voice of the majority has not been ascertained by any show of hands, but it is generally perceived by intuition in a very remarkable way, and grave counsellors, who have been squatting in a circle all through the discussion, jump to their feet and disperse, knowing perfectly well what has been decided. If however the counsellors do not agree, they put the matter into the hands of the chief, and the chief, after having listened to the arguments pro and con, "cuts the matter" (*tjema mhaka*) by some short sentences, after which everybody must shout the royal salutation: "Bayete!"

When there are two parties present, the debate is conducted according to other rules. For instance, if a stranger wishes to have speech with a chief or to proffer some request, he is generally accompanied by a counsellor. The chief, together with some of his men, receives him either in the hut, if the affair must



Photo. A. Boud.

An inhabitant of the Nkhoma Court.

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643 be secret, or on the square, if there is no objection to making it
609 public. The chief and his men sit on one side, the visitor on
645 the other; if he wishes to conform strictly to all the laws of
671 etiquette, he will first explain the matter to his own Agent General,
who will communicate with the chief's special counsellor, repeating
the words of the visitor, sentence by sentence; the counsellor will,
in his turn, communicate with the chief, again telling him the
whole story, as if he had not heard a word of it before. The affair
will thus have passed through three hands and the answer should,
in due formality, be given through the same channels. These
precautions, which seem eminently superfluous, even somewhat
ridiculous, to a person unacquainted with Bantu etiquette,
evidently proceed from the fact that there are no stenographers
or secretaries to furnish any written record of the proceedings, so
that it is necessary to have as many witnesses as possible and that
these should thoroughly understand the matter under consider-
ation.

II. Judicial Cases.

1) SENSE OF JUSTICE.

671 As has often been remarked, the Bantus possess a strong sense
183 of justice. They believe in social order and in the observance
641 of the laws and, though these laws are not written, they are
609 universal and perfectly well known. The law is the custom,
534 that which has always been done. The old men, the counsellors
and more particularly the counsellors of the capital, are those
who can speak authoritatively. But everybody is welcome in
the hubo, where matters are discussed; even a stranger can take
part in the discussion. "No one is excluded, if he speaks rightly;
only fools, those who do not know anything" (Mankhelu).

671 This participation in the discussions of the hubo has developed
641 the sense of law to a wonderful extent amongst the Bantus. They
192 are all born advocates and judges, and take a great interest in this
business! No wonder therefore that the Thonga vocabulary

2) CIVIL CASES.

692 I will not assert that Thongas know the exact difference between
622 civil and criminal cases, the same tribunal judging them both and
643 all being called by the same name, milandju.
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If any distinction is made, it would be between private and official cases, *private cases* being those which are settled by the two parties concerned alone, without the intervention of the chief; whilst *official cases* are those in which the matter (*mhaka*) has been brought to the capital. As already explained, the headmen of the village try to settle the difficulties themselves; if they succeed, all the better, as the fine will be reduced to its minimum, whilst, before the Court, the fine would be doubled and the chief would keep half of it!

691 Ninety per cent of the civil cases are in connection with *lobola*. These are sometimes most intricate and I would refer to the description already given of some of them (p. 282 and Appendix VIII).

691 Divorce cases are also common. When a woman has definitely
586 left her husband, her relatives must return the *lobolo* money.
643 "You must give up to them £ 5 or an ox," says Mankhelu. The
614 chief Mubvesha who was known for his avarice used to arrest the husband and make him pay £ 25; he returned £ 15 to the wife's relatives and kept £ 10 for himself.

When money is returned, the children belong to the mother (See page 279).

691 Many cases may occur in connection with cattle. The case of
643 *redhibition* is foreseen: when I buy an ox and it dies on my hands
487 from a disease which was not known at the date of my purchase but which already existed, I have the right to go and ask for another in its place. But I bring the skin of the dead ox with me and one hoe inside it for the meat which I have eaten. If the seller refuses to accept my claim, I go to the chief and complain. He will summon the recalcitrant person and say to him: "Did not this man act well when he put a hoe inside the skin? Give him another ox" (Mankhelu.)

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643 When goats have damaged somebody's garden, there is no fine to pay. The shepherds are whipped and the matter is thus concluded. Should the father of the boys, however, take their part and protect them with his weapons, he will be summoned to the tribunal of the chief and have to pay a fine of £ 5 or two or three goats.

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686 Thonga Natives who have but a few head of cattle, are accustomed to entrust them to the care of neighbours possessing a large herd, in order to spare themselves the trouble of finding herding boys. There are some laws regulating this matter. If the owner of the cow, or the pig, or the goat, gives money in advance to the master of the large herd, all the calves, pigs, and kids, which may be born revert to him. But if he has not paid anything, the master of the herd is entitled to choose one pig out of the first litter; or he can keep the third or fourth calf or kid. If it be a hen, one of its chickens will belong to the man who took care of it. Should the owner forget to remit the due reward, there will be trouble (pongwe). When he goes to take his cattle back, the master of the herd will keep one head for himself, and, if a dispute arises, both will go to the chief, at least if the matter is important, if the animal in question, for instance, is an ox.

If an ox incorporated with another man's herd dies, the master of the herd will inform the owner in order that he may go and dispose of the meat. Should he be living too far off, the ox will be eaten on the spot and the skin will be sent to the owner.
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685 Suppose the master of the herd pretends that the ox is dead, but has only put it with another herd, and sent a skin to the owner to deceive him, it is a case of theft, which will be judged as such.

3) CRIMINAL CASES.

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837 *Adultery.* Our tribe punishes adultery very severely indeed, at least when the woman is married. The fine is a full lobolo. (See page 197.) Amongst the Nkunas if the accused man denies his guilt when questioned indoors, the bones are consulted, or even the magicians who practise the "vumisa" divination. (Part

VI.) If found guilty, he will have to pay an extra fine of two oxen (1).

When the abducted woman is an unmarried girl, the matter is not serious. No trouble is entailed, provided she does not become pregnant. In the latter case, the seducer can say: "Ndji dlele ku dya: I have killed to eat," viz. "I am ready to lobola the girl" (p. 97). If the girl does not consent, the man is free. But if the man does not wish to marry the girl by paying a full lobolo, whilst the girl and her relatives want him to do so, he will have to pay as much as £ 30 and an ox. "He has spoilt his cause!" His own relatives will be arrested and forced to pay. They are responsible for him and will scold him severely. (Mankhelu).

Fighting ending in blows. The wounded man runs to the square of the capital and shows himself. The assailants will have to pay a fine of £ 8, three for the chief and five for the victim, or of two oxen, one for the chief and one for the plaintiff. (Mankhelu).

Murder. A distinction is made between involuntary murder, which is an accident (mhango, Dj.), and a deliberate assassination.

In the case of *involuntary murder*, Mankhelu describes the proceedings as follows:—Should you have killed a man by accident in a hunting trip, for instance, you will try to arrange matters directly with his relatives, if you were good friends; your relatives will give them a girl. You dare not offer your own daughter, because they may refuse her, on account of their bad feelings! The same objection will not be made if your people provide the girl. They will accompany her with ten hoes and an ox, saying: "This is fat to smear our daughter." The notion which is at the base of this custom is not that a human person is the natural compensation for another human person, but that you give the diminished family a means of making good its loss. In fact as soon as the girl has born a child to the relatives of the deceased, she is free. If these men wish to keep her as their wife, they must

(1) The neighbouring Chopi tribe, on the contrary, leaves the husband to arrange matters as he likes. Formerly he used to kill the adulterer. But cases of adultery are never brought before the chief.

682 lobola. Viguet explains that this is done according to the old
 338 saying of Native law : "Nwombekazi a yi ambi nandju" viz. "a
 826 cow which has calved is not used to pay a fine ; the calf pays it."
 672 (See page 217.) He adds that the ten hoes sent with the girl pay
 for the ribs of the murdered man. (The Ba-Thonga believe that
 the human body has only ten ribs!) A case of involuntary homicide
 682 is generally not brought before the chief, as the law is well known
 643 and no one would try to evade his duty. Should however the
 672 murderer not have been on good terms with the deceased, the
 matter will be discussed before the Court.

If the murder was *deliberate*, it is punished by death.
 682 At least such was the law in former times, when Natives still
 672 possessed the power of condemning to death. Now the fine is
 also the remittance of a woman. But owing to the existing
 hatred, and from fear of being obliged to lobola the relative of
 the murderer, the family of the deceased does not take the girl.
 She is sold by her parents and only the money is remitted to
 the plaintiff. (Mankhelu.)

682 Amongst the Ba-Ronga, when a near relative of the murdered
 627 man wishes to avenge himself by killing the assassin, his people
 prevent him from doing so, in order to bring the matter before the
 chief. When a man called Mashabe was killed by the son of
 Gigiseka, Maphunga's brother, the murderer, had to pay £ 20.
 The fine may be as much as £ 25, but the idea is also to help the
 bereaved family to acquire a new spouse and, through her, new
 members. As for the murderer, he is regarded with scorn, and
 despised by the whole community. For a whole week, he must
 eat apart. He is unclean. So, at the time of luma bukanye,
 (page 400), he must also take miluru medicine together with
 the warriors who have killed enemies; but he does not drink it
 boastfully, extolling his deed! People say of him : "Look at
 the murderer!" (Mboza.)

The vendetta, the savage custom which makes it incumbent
 on the relations of a murdered man to avenge his death themselves
 at all costs and by any means, is absolutely absent from Thonga
 custom. It may be said that, as regards punishment of murder,
 they have reached quite a civilised stage in their judicial

685 has been pulled up and the sand nicely smoothed down, so that
 343 any traces of a thief would easily be seen. He will possibly be
 151 recognised at once by the trackers, owing to some peculiarity in the
 625 marks on the sand, the foot-print of each individual being more or
 less known; clever detectives can even ascertain the height and
 gait of a man from the length of his stride! If there are no
 peculiar marks in the foot-prints, the trackers will follow them and
 reach the village where the thief lives. They will perhaps take
 him by surprise in his hut. If the matter cannot be settled by
 the headman of the village and has to be brought before the
 chief, the guilty party will be fined as much as two, three or even
 five pounds sterling (Tobane) (1).

When detectives have been unable to trace a thief, they assume
 a philosophical attitude and say: "Only wait. A man who has
 stolen will steal again, and you will catch him another time!"

643 Revolt against the decisions of the chief's hubo is very rare. Should
 687 any person take the part of a condemned man and encourage
 him to oppose the decision of the Court, he will be beaten with
 a shambock on the square of the capital. "U onhi hubo," "he
 has spoilt the Court!" Moreover he may have to pay a fine
 of £ 2. (Mankhelu.)

643 Answer to some of Professor Frazer's questions on Government.

835 There are no separate chiefs for war and peace. But in time
 224 of war the great induna, who is the Commander-in-chief of the
 701 army, directs all military operations. — The chief is never required
 to marry his own sister or daughter. The only similar case of
 which I have heard, is that of a hunter who must have sexual
 relations with his daughter before going on a hunting trip (Part IV).

643 — The king's mother does not hold any special office. —

778 The chief does not keep any portion of his deceased predecessor
 excepting the nails and hair used for the mhamba (See page 386
 and part VI)

538 (1) The following interesting couplet in two sentences aptly describes the thief:
 Shikhangwa ready-to-hand? — The crown on the hat nicely rounded?
 Mangatha a puka ritho... — The hawk burns his claws...

The thief is like a crown on the top of a hat. He is a lazy person, he attitudinises
 and will not work. Evil will befall him, as with a hawk who tries to snatch the meat
 that is roasting and burns his claws!

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⁷⁸⁹ and Part VI). — To protect and to prolong his life, diviners sometimes call together the whole clan in order to discover and eventually arrest those who might bewitch and kill the chief. This gathering is called *nyiwa* (See Part VI). — As for rain making, it is in the hands of the proper rain doctors (Nkuna) or is done by the ceremonies of *mbelele* (Part VI). — He is not held responsible for public calamities. — If his bodily or mental powers fail, the *tinduna* discuss matters in his stead and he is not deposed.

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⁷⁶⁹ Chiefs are never worshipped during life time. After death, they are deified for their own family, who worship them, but not for their subjects. — They are not supposed to turn into wild beasts after their death. — The custom of appointing mock kings does not exist. Only on the death of a chief can one of his relatives be nominated to take his place, and watch over his property until the adjudication of the inheritance.

713 of palm leaves 5 in. and handle 35 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. As previously
 411 mentioned, the handle of the large sized assagai is broken at the
 595 warriors' death, being "he," or his defilement; but the blade
 643 "never dies." It belongs to the chief, as does also the shield, and
 the son will inherit it. During the warrior's life, it is kept in the
 hut of his *first wife*. She is called the owner (nwinyi) of the assagai.
 It is taboo for the other wives to touch it; another fact which
 shows the special position of the first wife. (Comp. p. 284.)

713 Another weapon in more restricted use and which can also
 411 be employed for cutting wood, is the *axe* or *hatchet*, of which I
 2439 have met with two descriptions (No. 3); the blade (mbimbi) may
 be narrow and elongated—it is then called shingwatane,—or
 broad and rounded,—when it is the shiyema. These hatchets
 are firmly inserted in their wooden handles like the axes of the
 lake-dwellers. European manufacturers now export a consider-
 able number of semicircular hatchets, similar to the one on the
 right in my illustration, to Delagoa. The one here portrayed
 will be at once recognised as being of Native make. I may also
 mention the big *knives* (mikwa), a sort of sword; one sometimes
 meets brawny fellows walking along the paths, armed with these
 dangerous looking implements! However they are quite in-
 offensive.

713 I managed to obtain from a traveller a beautiful *dagger* which
 411 he was carrying slung across his breast; it is a rare specimen
 171 and comes, I am told, from the Ba-Ndjao tribe (No. 5). The
 sheath is made of two pieces of wood, artistically carved and
 fastened together with a plait of iron wire; it is slightly hollowed
 out to allow the blade to enter; this is firmly fixed in the handle
 through which it passes from end to end, coming out at the
 extremity, where it is bent back and thus held tightly in place.
 The Ba-Pedi in the Zoutpansberg also make similar knives.

714 Finally, when the warrior holds in one hand his large assagai,
 171 in the other will be found his *shield* (shitlhangu) (No. 1), which he
 grasps by the stick around which this piece of defensive armour
 pivots. The Thonga shield is made like that of the Zulus, of a
 piece of ox-hide, oval in shape and of varying size, sometimes all
 of one colour and sometimes variegated. (The several battalions

714 in the Chaka army were distinguished by differently coloured shields.) On either side of the central line, from top to bottom, two parallel rows of small square incisions are made (*magabela*) through which are run strips of hide of a different colour, the effect being a series of oblongs. By an ingenious device the ends of these strips are so tied at the back of the shield as to form several sheath-like nooses into which is inserted the stick by which it is held. The space between the two lines of oblongs is called the back (*nhlana*) of the shield. The nooses or sheaths are four or six in number: two or three at the top, and two or three at the bottom, a space being left in the middle, where the warrior grasps the stick. This stick tends to strengthen the shield, but, being merely passed through the nooses, it acts also as a pivot around which it can turn: it is this pivoting action which gives to the shield its chief value as a protection. An assagai (usually thrown with considerable strength) would easily penetrate the ox-hide, but when it strikes the shield, the force of the impact causes it to pivot and the weapon is deflected to one side: should it strike exactly in the middle, it would hit the stick, break it and lose all further impetus. It is hardly necessary to add that the *shitlhangu* of the South African Black is absolutely useless when opposed to bullets; it was invented to protect the warrior against the dreaded assagai, at a time when firearms were not yet thought of!

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177 During the last century the Ba-Ronga have begun to use guns for hunting and also for war. Although the sale of firearms to the Natives has often been prohibited, the Ba-Ronga were reported to possess several hundreds of rifles at the commencement of the 1894 war, and also to be fairly proficient in their use... very different from the Madagascans, who removed the sights from their rifles on the score that they were in the way when taking aim!

C. THE MOBILISATION OF THE ARMY.

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643 In the Zihlahla country, when the chief wished to muster his forces, he did so by means of the *shipalapala*, the rudimentary trumpet which I described in the preceding chapter. A swift

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643 messenger (shigidjimi) ran from village to village, blowing this instrument; when he was tired he passed it on to some other good runner, who carried the summons further afield; he ran and ran until he was exhausted, when he handed the trumpet to a third, and so on until the whole country had been covered.

At the sound of the well-known call of the shipalapala, the warriors shout: "A hi hlomen!" — "to arms!" They at once put on their war costumes and repair to the capital.

In Nondwane all the sub-chiefs possessed their shipalapala, and each of them summoned his own people. There the shipalapala mostly sounded to call for dances and for feasts. When the army was mobilised merely to discuss matters quietly, messengers ran through the country shouting: "Mayivonule!" — "take the shields!"..., to which the warriors answered: "A hi hlomen!" — "to arms!" The messenger had to go quickly. "He did not lose time in grinding tobacco;" he only indicated the time when the army was expected in the capital.

Should matters be more serious, should a hostile yimpi have invaded the territory, every one can give the alarm (tlhabela mukhosi), shouting: "Yi ngeeneeeeeee!" "It has entered!" (viz., the hostile army has invaded our territory). All the women flee away and the men run to the capital.

D. THE MUKHUMBI, THE CIRCLE OF WARRIORS.

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726 Decked out like wild animals, the warriors hasten with all speed to the chief's village, where the regiments muster. The army (1) is divided into a certain number of battalions, *mabotshu*, or *meboko*, all men of about the same age forming a *botshu*. The *botshu* itself is made up of several companies, *mitlawa* or *mabandla*, and may therefore vary very much in numbers.

(1) Yimpi (pl. tiyimpi) in Thonga corresponds to impi in Zulu.

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703 An extraordinary war spirit comes over them all..." And every one having witnessed these performances in the Thonga or Zulu mukhumbi will confess that they are wonderfully impressive. It is a mixture of dramatic, epic and lyric poetry, three literary genres which are still confounded, the whole being enhanced by a deep, wild music and subject to the laws of a certain artistic style.

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726 The fighting instincts are excited to the highest pitch by these patriotic choruses and dramatic representations. Thus should the troops be slow in making a start, the young men go dancing to the chief and beg him to "grant them permission" to go forth and slay, or rather to "give them men" to slaughter (ku nyika). The Native idea appears to be that the chief holds the lives of the enemies in his hands; without his permission they cannot go forward, but this once given, they rush enthusiastically to the fray. They even go so far as to taunt him with being an old woman, a coward, because he will not let them go at once (1).

When the excitement has reached the culminating point, and it has been definitely decided to fight, the time has arrived for the magic treatment by which the warriors will be rendered invulnerable.

G. ADMINISTERING THE WAR-MEDICINE.

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751 This custom is probably of ancient origin, but I have reason to believe that, amongst the Ba-Ronga, it was practised without any great formality until the advent of the Zulu influence, when it was brought into much greater prominence and invested with more solemnity. "Drinking the war-medicine" took place on several occasions during the revolt of 1894 to 1895. At Zihlahla this potion was administered to all warriors before the rebel attack.

(1) Gungunyana, on one occasion, when his warriors were importuning him with similar requests, sent the more ardent spirits to wage war unarmed against the wild beasts, and I was told they actually succeeded in capturing a leopard alive and brought it back to the chief!

726 one of the Natives of the country : there are no fewer than seven
789 acts in this grand performance of "preparation for battle."

643 a) In the first place when the chief foresees that a campaign is
828 imminent, he has water drawn, and all the necessary ingredients
gathered together : then he goes into retirement for one month,
during which he is busy preparing the medicine with the magician
who knows all about the recipe.

b) At the end of this time the entire army is summoned to
the capital. A bull is brought out before the assembled soldiers
and the chief strikes it on the head with a stick : this infuriates the
animal, which must be caught and thrown down by the men
unarmed ; the chief then approaches and kills it with an axe.
They dismember the carcase, cutting off the flesh in strips, which
they cook in a large battered pot, stirring it with their assagais and
pouring into it at the same time "the medicine of hatred."

c) On this day the army is mustered and formed in a circle.
The Commander-in-Chief takes the meat, cuts it into small
pieces and mixes with it certain human ingredients : a finger
taken from a hostile petty chief killed in battle has been carefully
preserved ; the dried up phalange is scraped and the bone-dust
thus obtained is mixed with the medicine. This additional
ingredient is to prevent any feeling of remorse, any prickings of
conscience : "ku susa lipfalo," literally "to remove the diaphragm,"
the seat of the conscience, according to Ronga ideas. (See
later on a more probable explanation of this rite.) The
Commander-in-Chief takes the pieces of meat thus seasoned
and throws them into the mouths of the soldiers, who must not
touch them with their hands. The food must be received between
the teeth ; any meat falling to the ground is picked up by the
children.

d) On the following day, the whole army proceeds to a large
lake (the lake of Shika, near the village of Nhlampfukazi) to be
treated with another medicine, an emetic. This is placed on a
skin in the middle of the lake : the skin is withdrawn, leaving the
particles of the drug floating on the water : each warrior must
stoop down and swallow a mouthful of the emetic. He will vomit
yesterday's meat : "fear will be thrown up and valour will remain"

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643 (ku hlantiwile butoya, ku sele burena). The chief having meanwhile taken up his position on a neighbouring hill, the several regiments rush towards him, surround him and beg to be sent as soon as possible to fight and to slay.

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789 c) But, before this can be done, the chief returns to the capital, the army following him. A double trial has still to be undergone. A large broom is made of small branches of trees soaked in fat from sheep's tails and is then set on fire. The chief walks round carrying his flaming torch, passing it rapidly before the faces of the warriors formed in a circle. Some of the helmets catch fire and the wearers are promptly ordered to fall out of the ranks. The chief addresses them in angry tones: "Deliver up to me," he says, "the charms you are concealing! 'Tis only I, the chief, who may possess enchanted drugs. You certainly have some, as your plumes took fire... Look at the other warriors; the feathers on their heads are not burnt!" This trial is probably a means of frightening suspected traitors or of expelling wizards (baloyi).

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789 f) All shields are now "presented" all round the circle. The chief bends back the point of an assagai and with it strikes each shield, but not with sufficient force to pierce it... This "consecration" of the shields will doubtless make them a more secure protection against the enemy's weapons.

g) Lastly the series is closed by the "aspersion." A mortar is produced in which some leaves are soaking; these are stirred round in water and the chief sprinkles the whole army. This is the final ceremony. The chief remains at home: the warriors thus fortified and protected against all dangers start on their expedition.

This last act only is performed in the clans of Shirindja, Nwamba and Zihlahla.

H. ON THE WAR PATH. THE BATTLE. STRATEGY. PANICS. RETURN HOME.

726 The mukhumbi has been "built" for the last time. Proclamations have all been issued. Nothing remains but to start.

This starting of the army (ku lethwa) is also done according to

726 As regards the order of the march, the battalions of the young
701 men, stationed on either side of the entrance, go first; they
643 form the advanced guard, the post of greatest danger. The
 scouts, tinhlori (Dj.) tinhloli (Ro.), go in front; each company
 has its leader to whom these scouts bring reports. It is the duty
 of the young men to surround the position to be carried and to
 make the assault. The two sides of the circle then follow, and
 lastly the chest of the army, forming the rear guard. The chief
 thus brings up the rear, protected by the battalions of veterans.
 But generally the chief does not go to battle; he remains at home.

726 During the campaign, the whole clan is subjected to many taboos.
784 Those who remain at home must keep quiet (rula). No noise
777 must be heard in the villages. The women must not close the
722 doors of the huts. It is taboo: their husbands might meet with
 "bitterness" (shibiti). They might lack strength to run away.

Fire must be lit in the huts in the evening, in order that the
 warriors may "have light" where they are. It is taboo to omit
 this precaution. Work in the fields must be more or less suspend-
 ed; women may attend to it in the morning only, before the heat
 of the day, while the air is still fresh. "Then, if a warrior has
 stepped on a thorn, the thorn will be cool (titimeta); if he has
 knocked against a stump, the stump will be quiet and not hurt him.
 (Mbōza.)" Old men who remain at home must keep watch, and
 if they see a messenger coming, they follow him to the chief.

765 Should he bring bad news, they do not inform the women, as it is
726 taboo to mourn over warriors killed in war before the return of the
834 army. A fine is imposed upon those who contravene this law.
777 It is taboo also to have sexual relations as long as the army is on the
784 war-path. This would cause thorns to hurt the warriors and they
722 would be defeated. (Mankhelu.)

643 According to Mankhelu, the mukhumbi may be again formed
726 after arriving in the proximity of the hostile army. The
 battalions will be sent one after the other by the great adjuna who
 will watch the progress of the fight. If he sees his men giving
 way, he "pours" (tshelela) new companies to help those who
 are fighting until they rush the position (gwabula) and put the
 enemy to flight. Then the pursuit begins. The dust flies up

J. SOME REMARKS ABOUT WAR RITES.

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726 The war rites of the Thongas, whatever may be their origin — and they seem to be a mixture of old Thonga and new Zulu customs. — form a very interesting and complete whole.

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829 The most noticeable are the *national rites*. In war time, the very existence of the clan is threatened, because the chief, the central and vital cell of this organism, is in danger. Hence the readiness of all the warriors to answer to the first call of the *shpalapala*, and to gather round him, "building the circle," which protects him, the whole clan forming a single village and binding itself by the striking ceremonies of *guba* and by patriotic songs, to die for him. Notice that most of the *guba* songs extol the chief. All these customs in which the individual or collective courage is stimulated, the *guba* and the *gila*, are national or social rites directed towards the salvation of the clan. They owe their origin to the national idea.

But war also brings dangers to every warrior. Hence the *protective* rites of sprinkling the mukhumbi with the war-medicine of the clan, or of giving each man some of it to swallow. The rite is inspired by the notion *similia similibus curantur*, the idea being that the warrior, having eaten a small portion of the enemy, will become invulnerable to his blows.

But other rites, especially the war taboos, seem to owe their origin to the *idea of passage*.

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834 The whole clan enters upon a special phase as soon as war has been decided upon by the chief, "who gives it" to his warriors. Hence the taboos observed at home, many of which are exactly the same as those of the circumcision school and of the period of mourning. We notice the same contrast already so often mentioned: certain sexual prohibitions are removed (e. g. a queen will enter quite naked into the mukhumbi!)

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761 tions (before 1890). Three persons of that family died. The bones were consulted and the diviner asked: "Have you not slain a Ndjao?" They answered: "Yes." — "Then," said the bone-shraver "you will all die as this man has followed you." The bones showed that, in order to avoid the destruction of their family, the Ndindindis had to offer a girl to the ghost of the slain, a living sacrifice. This girl would not be allowed to marry, or even to be courted by boys. Should she have relations with a man it would be necessary to replace her by another. Thus the angry ghost would be propitiated.

177 Governments have everywhere placed Native Commissioners to watch over their coloured subjects. This has put an end to the tribal wars. Natives are no longer allowed to indulge in their old fighting customs. They may avail themselves of a war between Europeans to square up old accounts with each other, as happened during the Anglo-Boer war, but they are forbidden to follow the war-path any longer. In many parts of South Africa they have even been disarmed. This change, as a whole, is a favourable one. Native wars never brought blessing to the race. It tends however to destroy one of the springs of patriotism, and in this way it impoverishes the Native mind.

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64 c) These Native Commissioners have placed a very effective check, not only upon the military tendencies of the tribe, but upon the power of its chiefs. The authority of the chief in the clan has certainly been diminished. In some instances he has been deposed, or banished in consequence of war, and the tribe has remained without a head and without force, as it were emasculated, and unable to guide itself. As Mankhelu said: "Our chief is the forest into which we retreat! Without him we are but women!" This was sadly noticeable in the case of the Zihlahla or Mpfumodlan, which was perhaps the most developed of all the Ronga kingdoms and which suffered most from the 1894-96 war. Its young chief Nwamantibyané was caught and deported to some spot in Eastern Africa, and the clan was dismembered, a great number of men emigrating to the Transvaal; the others remained dissatisfied but powerless in their old territory, and were incorporated with Matjolo or Mabota.

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69 Even when the Native chief is maintained in his position by the Whites, his power is curtailed. As a judge, he is no longer allowed to inflict capital punishment. His tribunal only judges minor cases, and beside and beyond him, there is a further appeal, the Court of the White Commissioner, which is ready to consider every important case. Should the Native chief be unjust or selfish in his decisions, the subjects will go more and more to the White tribunal. It may be that their claims will not be so well understood as in their own *hubo*, but they will perhaps meet with fairer treatment. Shrewd and clever Native Commissioners thus succeed in attracting more applicants to their residences than the chief to his capital (1). This dual control leads to a progressive loosening of the tribal tie.

(1) This was the case for instance in Nondwana. The unjust and arbitrary rule of Mubvumba compelled many of his subjects to go "*shikashikweni*," viz., to the Portuguese Administrator of Mozambique.

423 By law the soil belongs to the Chief, but only that, through
643 him, it may become general property. No one can buy land.
It is gratuitously assigned to any and all who wish to settle in the
country. The mere fact of *kondza*, viz., making submission to
the chief (Vol. I, p. 433), entitles the Native to as much land as
may be necessary for his subsistence.

423 It will be readily understood, however, that the supreme Chief,
622 however small his territory may be, can hardly assume the duty
of marking out the various small allotments for his subjects. In
ordinary practice this is done by the headmen of the villages
(numzane), the important men of the country, (I will call them
A), who obtain the grant of considerable tracts of land, which
they apportion amongst those under their jurisdiction. They and
their near relatives cultivate the most fertile parts of these tracts,
or districts, and when any one (say B) wishes to settle on their
reserve, they "cut the bush" for him, "*tjemela nhoba*," to use
the technical expression; they accompany the would-be-settler to
an uncultivated piece of land and together they fix the boundaries
of a plot of ground which is then assigned to him. A tree, the
corner of a lake, a well, or an anthill, may be used as landmarks in
this primitive surveying operation. The new-comer will clear as
much of the land as he can, till it, and the fields, together with
the trees they contain, will become thenceforth his property.
Should any of his relatives wish to settle near him, he will, in his
turn, assign to them a portion of his land, which they may clear
423 and cultivate; and so the distribution continues. Supposing B is
428 not satisfied with his allotment, or is unable to live on neighbourly
622 terms with A, and builds his hut in some other spot, he cannot sell
or otherwise dispose of his land, as it must revert to A, the original
owner. On the other hand, should B die, his wife would inherit
his gardens. Should father or mother die, the property would
naturally pass to the sons, who would divide the fields between
their wives. Thus we see that real estate is hereditary, but
cannot be sold. A similar state of affairs would result should
A, the numzane, who ranks almost as a petty chief, leave the
country; all his rights in connection with the tract that he may
have occupied for the last fifty years will cease with his departure.

231 Native goats are very small and frequently attacked by a disease called ndlwabane which decimates whole herds. They are not tended with sufficient care, although a special hut (mhala) is sometimes built to protect them from the rain.

Goats are killed by piercing the heart : this is at any rate the ritual way of killing them (l. p. 158). The officiating person stands on the right of the animal and stabs it in the left side, holding the left leg. The animal suffers acutely ; goats are however often slaughtered by cutting the throat, not from any feelings of compassion, but in order to prevent them crying too long, as "this would surely bring many people on the spot and you would have to share the meat with them!" (Mboza.)

231 If the ox plays an important part in *social life*, the goat
782 seems to be specially reserved for sacrifices, that is to say for *religious usages*. This ritual use entitles us to suppose that, as millet seems to be the oldest cereal, the goat is the most ancient domestic animal amongst the Thongas, and, no doubt, amongst all South African Bantus.

The gall bladder, the astragalus, the half digested grass found in its intestines, strips made of its skin, all play a special part in the ceremonies and superstitious practices of the tribe previously mentioned. The gall bladder (nyongwa) is fixed in the hair of the person in whose honour the goat was slaughtered. The astragalus (nhlolo) is fastened to the wrist, the ankle or the waist as a means of protection. The *psanyi* (half digested grass) is taken from the shihlakahla stomach, and is used in connection with the invocation of the gods in the sacrifices. (See Part VI, Compare also l. p. 111, 160-162.)

136 *Sheep*, hamba, yin-tin, (Ro.) nyimpfu, yin-tin, (Dj.) are scarce
231 in our tribe, and are mostly without wool. The wool sheep is
643 called *shitlapu*. It is not taboo for subjects to possess sheep,
782 but this animal is connected in a special manner with the chiefs. Its astragalus designates royal personages in the set of divinatory bones. It is used in the national sacrifices, those offered to the chief's ancestors at the capital. (See Part VI.) Let us remind the reader that its skin is used to carry a child in case of *bovumba* (l. p. 194).

202 crocodiles.) For the Mavundjas: *Kahlamba ntjhaba yo nonoha!*
618 (The big mountain, difficult to climb.) (1)

224 I have already described the part of a slain animal which is to
643 be given to the chief, when speaking of the prerogatives of the
825 master of the country (I. p. 406). Here are some supplementary
845 details: The general idea is that he must receive that part of the
body which was in contact with the soil, because the chief is the
owner of the soil. In the case of smaller antelopes however he
does not claim anything. For the eland he requires, in addition
to the ordinary tribute, half of the *bofu* i. e. of the paunch of fat
which is found round the heart of this animal and which is believed
to possess precious medicinal properties (especially for new-born
children born with a

224 membrane round the
643 head). As regards
buffaloes and other
big animals, should
they be killed far
away from home,
their meat is cut
into strips (*mishakatsu*) and two bundles are brought back to the chief; it is also the rule that the head
of any beast of great size should be eaten on the *bandla*, the
meeting-place of the men in the capital.



Buffalo hunter with his victim.

224 So far I have described hunting with assegais, sticks and dogs.
824 But Thongas possess another method of killing big animals, a
method which is perhaps more ancient and which has sometimes
proved very useful. This is the *marindji trap*, i. e. a large pit dug
in the earth, covered with branches and full of pointed stakes upon
which the animal falls and impales itself. These stakes are made

(1) The Pedis have the same custom. The Ba-Khaha cry: "Haratsa! Mugoni! We!" This expression comes from the verb *ratsa*, to cross a river on a tree trunk, as the Khaha clan is said to have been held back in its ancient migrations by a swollen river and to have *ratsa* it successfully. The remembrance of this feat of their ancestors has remained and has given rise to this rallying cry. Other Pedis say: "*Siondja kkomu*," viz., "the killer will be given an ox for his reward."

itself. Afterwards he had to drink the broth and eat the meat. 224
 The aim of the treatment was to enable him to kill more elephants. 777
 In the case of the elephant as well as of the hippopotamus the chief 643
 of the country has to perform the lurulula as well as the hunter
 "because he is the chief of all the animals of the country and he
 would be unable to govern it successfully if he did not do this."

The *rhinoceros* (*shibetshana*) is not common in Thongaland; a 224
 few of these animals are found in the extreme south of the Maputju 825
 country. The same rules were observed when the hunters had
 succeeded in killing one; but this is no easy task because, as
 Muvumbi said, the rhinoceros is terribly wild, as it has no
 "mapfalo." The mapfalo is a piece of cartilage which is found in
 all animals between the ribs, beneath the sternum; it is the
 diaphragm; it is also the seat of fear or of the conscience. It is
 this particular cartilage which throbs in the case of great fear.
 The rhinoceros has no mapfalo; therefore it fears nothing and
 rushes savagely upon the hunter. Its meat is so delicious that
 when a man has tasted it he no longer wishes to drink water!

I never heard mention of the lurulula in connection with the 224
lion (*ngghala* (Djo.), *ndjau* (Ro.)). To avoid being mauled by lions 782
 the hunters put into their mouths a little of every kind of food 825
 mixed with their powerful drugs and spit it out to the four winds
 in order to appease the ancestor-gods of the country. Then if
 they meet with a lion, the wild beast, instead of rushing upon them,
 will look at them quietly, its saliva dropping from its mouth, and
 will do them no harm.

Strange to say the *buffalo* (*nyari*) has no *nuru*, and when I asked 825
 why this was, my Maputju informant told me: "The buffalo is an
 ox." This answer may perhaps help us to understand something
 more about the *nuru* idea.

The statement regarding the *zebra* (*mhangwa*) is more curious
 still. "Mhangwa a yi lubiwi! Yi ni mabala; i nala; a yi ngeni
 hosin" viz. "No tax is paid for the zebra; it is an animal with
 many colours (stripes); it is an enemy; it must not enter the
 village of the chief." We have met with the same prohibition in
 connection with the village of the parents-in-law (I. p. 250).

As regards the *crocodile* (*ngwenya*) also called *shiwutlani*-